

The Distance Slabs of the Antonine Wall: The Surveyors' Record Carved in Stone.

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Key words: History

SUMMARY

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Romanum), Vallum Antonini, International Borders, Distance Slabs.

ABSTRACT

It is uncanny what unknown amazing details of history I have discovered while researching other sites and topics. This is exactly the case with regard to the fascinating collection of heirlooms unearthed along the Antonine Wall during hundreds of years of archaeological investigation of this little cousin of the more substantial and well known Hadrian's Wall erected earlier to the south. During various periods a continuous set of distance slabs have been dug up which accurately record on ornamental stone tablets precisely the lengths of segments of wall surveyed and built as well as naming the legion responsible for the construction of that portion. As soon as I read the words "distance" and "accurate" to me there could be only one group of the Roman legions who could

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have provided the data required to nominate the right length for these sections of the Wall – the mensors (surveyors) of the elite squad known as the immunes. Along the way I was also delighted to find out that one of my favourite Scottish surveyors, William Roy, had re-surveyed the remains of this ancient earthen rampart during 1755 before he became Surveyor-General in 1765.

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